

Session VII

Caregiving and Coping with Alzheimer's disease

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LEVELS OF MENTAL IMPAIRMENT IN THE JAMAICAN ELDERLY

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A recent survey of the 60+ population in Jamaica showed the population to be ageing and the 75+ age group to be the fastest growing group. Preliminary analysis of the mental status, using a screening tool supported the fact that the majority of the elderly, 85.9% are mentally competent. Of the 14% mentally impaired, 2.3% were severely impaired. However percentages translate into over 33,000 persons who may be in need of services. Impairment increased with age and was highest among those over 85, the highest rates being found among females over the 85, and this has service delivery implications. A significant finding involved caregiving as 50 % of those mentally incompetent were totally responsible for their own care including financial matters. The issue of caregiving was discussed with those with carers and the majority of caregivers were family members.